FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

17 MARCH 1987

Lebanon

Anglican Church envoy Terry Waite is being held in the Iranian Embassy in West Beirut, the Soviet paper *Literaturnaya Gazeta* announced in its forthcoming 19 March edition. The paper said it obtained this information from its own enquiries.

In another development, Shi'ite cleric Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din told a Beirut newspaper that he has conducted "arduous negotiations" to save the life of French hostage Jean-Louis Normandin, AFP reported. Shams al-Din, the deputy chairman of the Higher Shi'ite Council, said that Normandin "will probably be saved," though he noted that no promises have been made in this regard.

Amal and Palestinian gunmen continued to exchange fire in the Shatila and Burj al-Barajinah areas, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported, noting a Palestinian statement that three people were killed and four wounded in the refugee camps 16 March.

Syria

Comment on U.S. — Damascus radio viewed U.S. interest in an international peace conference for the Middle East as an attempt to divert public attention from the internal "scandals" that have made President Reagan "perhaps the weakest President in the history of the United States." However, President Reagan is not the initiator of the call for an international conference and his administration will not be able to "exploit" the proposal to cleanse its reputation from the "dirt" of successive scandals, the commentary added.

Budget Cut — The state budget for 1987 provides for a 4.87 percent cut in government spending, the finance minister disclosed in a statement to the People's Assembly reported by Damascus television. Budget allocations will be matched more realistically with available resources, he said, and the emphasis will be on self-reliance.

Israel

"Private elements" in Israel financed trial expenses for the Pollards, but the Israeli Government "did not transfer any money whatsoever" to aid them, Jerusalem radio revealed.

In another report, the radio noted that Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin believes some U.S. officials "are deliberately keeping the Pollard affair alive in a mistaken effort to find other Israeli intelligence agents."

Saudi Arabia-Morocco

Saudi King Fahd, who arrived in Morocco 12 March, held talks with King Hassan II in Fes 16 March, Rabat radio announced.

Sudan

Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati concluded his visit to Sudan 16 March, SUNA reported. According to a Sudanese Foreign Ministry statement on the visit, a normalization of relations with Tehran "will not be at the expense of Sudanese relations with Iraq," SUNA added.

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Asian Group of 77 Meeting Adopts 'Dhaka Declaration'
BK161631 Dhaka Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] The ministerial meeting of the Asian Group of 77 has ended in the capital adopting unanimously the Dhaka declaration. The declaration calls for a genuine political will to launch a dialogue to overcome the world economic crisis. It also calls for revitalizing development and [word indistinct] in the developing nations as a means to establish a New International Economic Order. The leader of the Bangladesh delegation and president of the ministerial meeting, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, explained the salient features of the declaration at a news conference this afternoon. The deputy prime minister said the main outcome of the sixth Asian ministerial meeting is the Dhaka declaration. This declaration will place in a concise manner the Asian perspective of the present world economic crisis and possible policies and measures for its solution.

He said it is our expectation that the declaration will provide a basis and the direction to the African and Latin American regional meetings. This is not only because the Asian meeting has preceded the other two, but also because of the constructive analysis and useful proposals contained in the text.

The declaration expresses deep concern at the crisis faced by the world economy and disorder experienced in international economic relations. It says this economic disorder has been principally responsible for uneven and slow growth in developed countries, stagnation in most developing countries, and even negative growth in many of the developing nations. Interdependence of the countries and interlinkages of issues and problems have been brought into focus in the declaration. The document expresses serious concern at the continuing and increasing erosion of multilateralism and its substitution by bilateral arrangements.

The declaration says the development and employment objectives need to be achieved through a reconstruction of international relations based on equity through cooperative endeavors. The ministerial meeting also adopted a resolution on economic conditions in the occupied Palestine territories.

Earlier, in his concluding statement at the plenary session of the ministerial meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed said the Asian Group of 77 has given the right direction in the best interest of the developing countries. Our action today has reconfirmed the positive role played by the Asian nations. Then, Kuwait on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Thailand on behalf of the ASEAN, India on behalf of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, and some other countries lauded Bangladesh for its constructive role and arrangements for the meeting. Our representatives and ministers and delegates from 32 countries attended the 3-day ministerial meet of the Asian Group of 77. President Ershad inaugurated the meeting on Saturday. The meeting was preceded by a 4-day meeting of senior officials.

Unions of 'Creative Intellectuals' Hold Congress

LD161001 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0436 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] Kabul, March 15, BAKHTAR — The second congress of the unions of creative intellectuals of the DRA concerning the role and duties of intellectuals of the creative unions of writers, artists, and journalists for the realisation of the policy of national reconciliation was opened here today.

Najib, general secretary of the PDPA CC, Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, Politburo member of the PDPA CC and chairman of the Council of Ministers of the DRA, some members of the Politburo Secretariat, and members of the PDPA CC had participated in the congress. The congress was also attended by the representatives of the unions of writers, artists, journalists, delegates of other social organisations and the delegations of the unions of writers, painters, and artists of the Soviet Union and the International Organisation of Journalists.

The congress was chaired by Abdorrahim Hatef, chairman of the Central Council of the National Front of the DRA.

Najib, general secretary of the PDPA CC, delivered a comprehensive speech on the significance of the role to be played by the creative intellectuals in the socio-economic, political, and cultural transformations of the country. He also elaborated on the tasks of the union of creative intellectuals for the implementation of the policy of national reconciliation.

Later, Najib and Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand awarded honourary medals to a number of veteran and prominent artists and journalists.

Separate greeting messages of the Army of the DRA, the unions of writers, painters, composers, and journalists of the Soviet Union were read out on the occasion. Similarly the messages of All-Afghanistan Women's Council, International Organisation of Journalists, the Union of Journalists of Czechoslovakia, and the Central Committee of the Democratic Youth Organisation of Afghanistan were also read out at the congress. The messages wished every success for the work of the congress.

The unions of creative intellectuals which consist of the unions of journalists, artists, and writers started their work separately.

Najibullah Views Journalist Proceedings

LD160938 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0503 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] Kabul, March 15, BAKHTAR — The Second Congress of the Union of Journalists of the DRA was held here today.

Najib, general secretary of the PDPA CC, participated in the congress.

During the session the practical works accomplished by the union since its founding in 1980, as well as deficiencies and shortcomings of the union were assessed. The basic report pertaining to the mission and duties of the journalists for the construction of a new society, especially the realisation of the process of national reconciliation in the country was also assessed in the session.

Later, the messages of the International Union of Journalists, the magazine *Democratic Journalism*, and journalists union of the Soviet Union were read out at the congress.

The messages have conveyed best wishes to the Afghan journalists for the successful conclusion of the works of the congress and realisation of the progressive objectives and plans of the party and state of the DRA, especially the process of national reconciliation.

At the end, Najib, general secretary of the PDPA CC, evaluated the proceedings of the congress critically.

He pinpointed the serious duties of the mass media and the Afghan journalists especially in relation to the present conditions in our society when the process of national reconciliation is successfully forging ahead.

The messages of the participants of the Second Congress of the Union of Journalists addressed to the CC of the PDPA, the Revolutionary Council of the DRA, as well as to those Afghan journalists living abroad were released.

During the work of the congress, medals of honesty and honorary medals approved by the Presidium of the Revolutionary Council of the DRA were awarded to some of the distinguished journalists.

Keshtmand Attends Writers Congress

LD161002 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0454 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] Kabul, March 15, BAKHTAR — The Second Congress of the Union of Writers of the DRA was held here today with the participation of Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, Politburo member of the PDPA CC and chairman of the Council of Ministers of the DRA.

At the outset, the main report of the congress with regard to the activities of the Union of Writers and its contribution to the development of literature and culture was read by Academician Dastagir Panjsheri, chairman of the Union of Writers. The report also stipulated the tasks of the union pertaining to the policy of national reconciliation.

The new constitution of the Union of Writers was also approved at the congress. Under the new constitution the name of the Union of Writers of the DRA has been changed to Association of Writers of Afghanistan.

Likewise, new members of the Central Council of the leadership of the Association of Writers of Afghanistan were elected in a free and democratic atmosphere.

The participants of the congress also released messages addressed to the Central Committee of the PDPA, Revolutionary Council of the DRA, the Extra-ordinary Supreme Commission

for National Reconciliation as well as a message addressed to Afghan writers, poets, and intellectuals living abroad.

Evaluating the work of the Congress, Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand specified the main aspects of the work of the Association of Writers of Afghanistan under the policy of national reconciliation aimed at ending war and bloodshed.

Minister on U.S. Aid, Swiss Arms to Pakistan

BK170951 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 17 Mar 87

[Text] The minister of state for external affairs, Mr Natwar Singh, informed the Rajya Sabha today that the United States has exempted Pakistan from arms aid curbs. The restrictions waived are the Symington and Glenn amendments of the foreign assistance act under which U.S. assistance is prohibited to countries which are receiving uranium enrichment or reprocessing technology, equipment, or material. He said during question hour that the tenure of the waiver has been reduced from 6 years to 2 years and the terms and conditions are more favorable. He shared members' grave concern and said the government is in constant touch with the United States to impress that government about the nonpeaceful dimensions of Pakistan's nuclear program. He said the external affairs minister, Mr N.D. Tiwari, who is now in New York, is planning to visit Washington later.

Reacting to Pakistan's latest advancement on the production of a nuclear bomb, the minister said the government has all options before it. It keeps reviewing its policies. We should look at the problem in a more courageous manner and mature way, Mr Natwar Singh said.

India has taken up with Switzerland the matter of the reported supply of arms to Pakistan by that country. The minister of state for external affairs, Mr Natwar Singh, said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today that according to press reports Switzerland sold to Pakistan arms and ammunition worth 32 million Swiss francs till last November.

Tiwari Comments on Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China

BK160925 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] The external affairs minister, Mr N.D. Tiwari, has said India will do whatever is appropriate under the circumstances if Pakistan does not desist from making a nuclear weapon. He declined to elaborate. Mr Tiwari was speaking in New York last night at a meeting with the Indian associations. He hoped that the world public opinion will assert itself and our neighbor will desist from manufacturing the weapon. He reiterated that India remains committed to the policy of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Referring to the recent statement of Pakistani nuclear scientist, Dr Abdul Qadir Khan, that Islamabad had a nuclear bomb, Mr Tiwari said India had conveyed its strong views on this to the U.S. Government. He pointed out that these weapons cannot be used against any country except India.

On Sri Lanka, Mr Tiwari hopes the island government and the militants will find ways and means to a solution under the 19 December proposals.

About border dispute with China, he said India wants to resolve it through negotiations.

Gandhi Envoy Returns From Sri Lanka Visit

BK150932 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 15 Mar 87

[Text] Mr Dinesh Singh, MP, on his return from Colombo this morning had a brief meeting with the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, at Raj Bhawan [Governor's house] in Trivandrum. Mr Singh flew to Colombo yesterday with a message from Mr Gandhi for President Jayewardene. He met the Sri Lankan president last evening.

Daily Views 'Naive Assessment' of Sr. Lankan Issue

BK150330 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
3 Mar 87 p 6

[Article by D.N. Moorty: "Failed Moves and Realities"]

[Text] It is difficult to find an instance of a foreign policy initiative undertaken by India that has suffered so severe a setback as Rajiv Gandhi's Lankan initiative. The scuttled Thimpu process did not lack drive or sincerity on the part of the Government. On the contrary, the Government is to be complimented on its consistency of approach, despite the fact that it received, for all practical purposes, only lip-service support both from the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from time to time. The moderate and the more responsive and sincere A. Amirthalingam's Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) — an elected organisation of the majority ethnic Sri Lankan Tamils (as differentiated from Sri Lankan Indian Tamils) — had to take a back seat.

On February 6, Sri Lankan Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali while talking to pressmen, on February 19 President J. R. Jayewardene in Parliament, and on February 20 Prime Minister R. Premadasa all categorically stated that there would be no negotiations unless the militants lay down their arms — a radical shift from the stance at Thimpu.

Note, too, the change in tone. The rider is that the island government is willing to talk — but with the LTTE directly. It is apparent that in the Sri Lankan government's thinking two aspects stand out: (a) Amirthalingam is a negligible force and the other militant groups — the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), the Eelam Peoples Revolutioanry Liberation Front (EPRLF), the Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) — are out of contention, (the other group, Eelam Revolutioanry Organisation of Students (EROS) is an ally of the LTTE, and (b) the Indian Government has no control over the LTTE.

The recent reverses the militants have suffered in the fortnight-long Sri Lankan offensive and by the fuel embargo — the LTTE in Jaffna and Mannar and the EPRLF and other groups in Mullaittivu, Batticaloa, and Amparai — are the consequence of Athulathmudali's well-planned strategy. The reduced efficacy of the LTTE's resistance is of its own making as it no longer has the complementary support of the TELO — which was till last May very strong in Jaffna — and the EPRLF.

The LTTE had, in an unwise and rash move, destroyed TELO bases in Jaffna, and killed more than 150 of the latter's cadres including its leader Sri Sabaratnam in May last year. The TELO, then, was taken by surprise, but when the LTTE tried to execute a similar action against the EPRLF, a TELO ally, they were less successful. For one thing, the EPRLF was prepared for such a possible LTTE offensive; for another, the organisation's main strength is in Mullaittivu, Batticaloa, and Amparai, where the LTTE has less strength.

Today, experienced 'military' TELO strategists like Bobby, author of the famous attack on the Chavakachcheri police station, Batti Master, known for his exploits in Batticaloa, and others, are not available for countering the Sri Lankan offensive. The truth is the LTTE overrated itself and played into Athulathmudali's hands.

The LTTE, no doubt, walked into a trap of their own making, but Athulathmudali duped them neatly. Knowing that he has now to contend only with the LTTE, Athulathmudali had them believe that the Sri Lanka government would not be averse to a pact with them. An 'unofficial' delegation flew to Jaffna for parleys with the LTTE's Jaffna commander 'Kittu'.

Prabhakaran arrived in Jaffna later with talk of taking over the civil administration, when the Lankan security forces struck. They imposed a fuel embargo, and after waiting for the embargo to take effect, launched their concerted offensive.

Athulathmudali declared that the offensive would stop if the LTTE gave up plans for taking over the civil administration. The very next day the LTTE announced that it had, indeed, given up all such plans. But the offensive did not stop. The Government forces, scoring their first morale-boosting, comprehensive success againt the militants, consolidated their ranks by adding four more army camps with 2,000 troops, in addition to the eight already in existence in the Jaffna peninsula. And, through all this both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government kept mouthing phrases lauding the importance of Indian mediatory efforts!

Another significant and curious aspect needs to be noted: When the LTTE decided to emerge as the sole militant force by annihilating TELO and EPRLF cadres, the logic stemmed from the political alignment in Tamil Nadu, where the LTTE knew it had nothing to fear — the ruling Anna DMK of Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran patronised the LTTE and the EROS, and the Opposition DMK of Karunanidhi patronised the TELO and the EPRLF!

The Indian foreign policy debacle is party, and paradoxically, due to the deservedly lauded adherence of Rajiv Gandhi to 'peace through negotiation', and the failure to divine and counter the "real intentions" of not only the JRJ government but also the LTTE and the nature of Sri Lankan Tamil militancy in general.

From Mrs Indira Gandhi to Rajiv Gandhi is a shift from a policy of studied confrontation and covert machinations to the policy of appeasement and conciliation. At home for the better certainly, but to expect the same to bear fruit in an island rocked by ethnic conflict rooted in the history of exploitation of the ethnic Tamils by the majority Sinhalese is, to say the least, a naive assessment of realities. One cannot help feeling that the excessive rhetoric on 'peace through negotiation' on international platforms has left India with little or no room to manoeuvre on the Lankan front.

For one thing — and this will be met with outright denial by the Government — what was nascent Tamil militancy took shape and assumed commanding proportions primarily due to 'covert' Indian aid. This writer, last year, spent a month in northern Sri Lanka visiting five of the eight contentious districts claimed to be the traditional homeland of Sri Lankan Tamils.

From the accounts garnered from the trained militants, it was learnt that at least four training camps existed in India, three in Tamil Nadu, and one — probably, the first one during Mrs Gandhi's time — allegedly in north India near Darjeeling. The militants also told this writer — one source was Jaffna TELO leader 'Sukhi' who later died of grenade injuries in a hospital at Adyar in Madras — that in the initial stages AK-47 assault rifles were supplied by India.

Later, key militants were sent to Lebanon to train in Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) camps. How the militants came to acquire the PLO connection is not clear. It is suggested the known Indian support for the Palestinian cause could be a factor involved. Other reports credit the connection to London-based Eelam supporter Eliathamby Rathnasabapathy, responsible for the birth of EROS. The PLO angle, in any case, accounts for the Israeli interest in Sri Lanka.

The militants acquired military hardware from the PLO connection and the clandestine European market. The money to finance the operation came first from bank robberies and then from drug-peddling. Arms worth millions were smuggled into Sri Lanka's northern province from Indian shores from Rameswaram and Vedaranniyam to destinations near Point Pedro, Mayliddi, and Mannar. There was also a continuous flow of smuggled electronic items into India, right under the noses of the Coast Guard (this writer went to Jaffna and returned in one of the militants' boats carrying the lethal contraband).

Between 1976 and 1985, when arms worth millions were being ferried across the Palk Straits, not once did the Coast Guard make a seizure — they were without doubt under instructions not to interfere with the militants' boats. Can our Government claim that all this transpired without its knowledge?

It is naive to assume that the militants, who had been so successful in countering the Sri Lankan security forces, would give up their dream of establishing an independent Tamil Eelam and opt for something like autonomous provincial councils in which the militants themselves would have had no role to play. They did go to Thimpu at India's insistence, but as is well known, only with extreme reluctance.

On the other side, the Thimpu process led to the Sri Lankan government offering what were in real terms rehashed and extended versions of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact of July 26, 1957 and the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayakam pact of March 24, 1965 — pacts which were never implemented by the Sri Lankan government, in which, first, regional councils and later, district councils with limited autonomy were proposed.

In fact, even if an agreement had been reached as a result of the Thimpu initiative, there would have been nothing Delhi could do to ensure its implementation. Amirthalingam, too, had his own doubts of Sri Lanka's sincerity and had told this writer that any pact reached must be guaranteed by India, even if it meant Indian presence in Sri Lanka. And to this, the Sri Lanka government, or for that matter any self-respecting sovereign State, can never agree. In such a situation, it is difficult to conceive the Sri Lanka government paying anything more than lip-service to the peace process. To Thimpu it had to go to placate the Big Brother, as the Sri Lankan Sinhalese press often accuses India to be.

The fact remains that only the Indian Government had any faith in the peace process. The ethnic Tamil masses at large, too, were sceptical. A wide spectrum of these, with whom this writer talked, felt that Rajiv Gandhi was "too soft" and he was "underestimating" the wily JRJ and Athulathmudali. In the words of a 65-year-old woman from Mullaittivu, "Had Indiramma been there, Jayewardene would not have acted like this (sending helicopter gunboats) Rajiv is being fooled. By the time Rajiv realises this, the 'mudalai' will have swallowed us all." (The Jaffna Mothers' Front refers to Athulathmudali as 'mudalai' which means crocodile).

Amirthalingam, Chandrahasan (Chelvanayakam's son and leader of PROTEG)[Protection of Tamil Eelam from Genocide], Eelaventhan (leader of Tamil Eelam Liberation Front), Indian leaders from Tamil Nadu, and the Sri Lankan Tamils themselves — all wanted positive Indian 'intervention'. The section which opposed any 'intervention' were the militants themselves:

"What are we here for?" they asked, "Let India extend support to us, we will ourselves liberate our Tamil homeland."

It needs to be emphasised that, not only the militants, but also the moderate Amirthalingam had warned Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that Thimpu could well be a facade behind which the Jayewardene government would seek to gain time to strengthen itself militarily. And, once Sri Lanka achieved its objective, the Indian move would fall flat, for Sri Lanka would cow the Lankan Tamils to submission, and then talk of 'peace' from a position of strength, a ploy that would guarantee that no ethnic Tamil can live in the island with self-respect and dignity. And, this is how things are taking shape today.

Minister Confirms Sabotage Cause of Train Crash

BK170945 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 17 Mar 87

[Text] The railway minister, Mr Madhavrao Scindia, told the Rajya Sabha today that the prima facie cause of Sunday's accident on the Madras-Tiruchirappalli Rock Fort express is sabotage. It appears to be a wanton act of terrorism with the intention to cause loss of lives of innocent citizens. A very powerful explosive appears to have been used to damage the rail bridge between Ariyalur and Chinnakudi stations. Making a suo moto statement, Mr Scindia said that further patrolling of track and guarding of important bridges in certain identified areas has been ordered. Ex-gratia payment to the injured and the next of kin of those killed is also being made.

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Noorani Says 'No Desire' To Make Atomic Weapon

BK170105 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu
1700 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Zain Noorani has reaffirmed that Pakistan's peaceful nuclear program will continue, no matter whatever difficulties we may have to face. This was stated by him while speaking on two adjournment motions sought to be moved separately by Tariq Chaudhry and Maulana Kausar Niazi which were related to U.S. ambassador's remarks on Pakistan's nuclear program.

Zian Noorani said that Pakistan's nuclear program is completely for peaceful purposes. He stressed that Pakistan is not making any atomic weapon, and it has no such desire at present.

The House chairman ruled the motions as out of order. The House also dealt with other two adjournment motions and it will resume session tomorrow morning.

Abdul Qadir Khan Sets 'Record Straight' on Interview

BK161058 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
2 Mar 87 p 1

[Text] Islamabad, March 1 — Eminent nuclear scientist, Dr Abdul Qadir Khan, in a statement here today denied having granted an interview to Indian journalist Kuldip Nayyar. He described the words attributed to him as mischievous, false, and concocted and an attempt to malign Pakistan.

Dr Qadir reiterated that Paksitan's modest nuclear research and development programme "is solely for peaceful purposes."

Following is the text of Dr Qadir's statement.

"My attention has been drawn to an article in some newspapers by an Indian journalist, Mr Kuldip Nayyar, containing an alleged interview with me. The article is mischievous, false, and concocted and is an attempt to malign Pakistan.

"I never gave an interview to Mr Kuldip Nayyar and never used the words attributed to me.

"To put the record straight, a Pakistani friend of mine living in Islamabad came to my house some 1-1/2 months ago to deliver an invitation for his marriage ceremony. He was accompanied by a person unknown to me and who was introduced as Mr Nayyar. Since my friend had come personally to deliver the invitation, as a matter of courtesy I asked him to have a cup of tea with me. While having tea Mr Nayyar, who I then learnt was Mr Kuldip Nayyar of India, asked casually my views about Pakistan's nuclear programme. I told him about Pakistan's policy of its readiness to sign nuclear non-proliferation treaty simultaneously with India and to renounce the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons. In response to a question I also told him that Paksitan's policy on this subject had been reflected, in unambiguous terms, more than once by our Prime Minister, Mr Mohammad Khan Junejo.

"As stated earlier, this coincidental meeting with Mr Kuldip Nayyar was without prior arrangement. The disclosure of this informal meeting and discussions by Mr Kuldip Nayyar is a breach of trust and is professionally unethical. I regret to say that he has misused my hospitality and has, unfortunately, indulged in unfair and bad journalism.

"I want to reiterate that our modest nuclear research and development programme is solely for peaceful purposes and is geared towards meeting our energy requirements for a fast growing industry.

'Credible' Stance on Nuclear Issue Should Be Adopted

BK161502 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
3 Mar 87 p 4

[Editorial: "Bomb Controversy"]

[Text] Predictably, Dr. A.Q. Khan's meeting with the well-known Indian journalist, Kuldip Nayyar, seems to have created quite a stir. Interviews with the 'father of the Pakistani nuclear programme' are quite rare and this, the first with a foreign journalist, was bound to have wide repercussions. While Dr A.Q. Khan's denial will probably contribute more to creating confusion rather than clarifying his candid comments on the nature and progress of our nuclear programme, its significance needs to be measured by two aspects. Firstly, its timing and, secondly, its contents. In terms of timing, the interview comes at a time when Pakistan has been facing a two- pronged threat: One from the Indians, who have raised the temperature on the borders, and the other from the Americans through their Ambassador in Islamabad who has been trying, quite unsuccessfully it seems, to bully and browbeat us on this issue. Additionally, there is the related aspect of peaceful overtures from the Soviet Union which have generated hope and optimism on a political settlement in Afghanistan.

The contents of the interview are not surprising and probably tend to confirm what people in Pakistan had generally felt and what others in the outside world have suspected. Pakistan's official hush-hush approach on this issue is largely governed by tactical considerations in not annoying the Americans, the Indians, and the Israelis. Shorn of all verbiage, the message given by Dr. A.Q. Khan through his interrview to Kuldip Nayyar is directed against all these detractors of Pakistan's "Islamic Bomb". To the Indians it is a "hands off Pakistan" message at a time when New Delhi has been carrying out massive warlike exercises all along our eastern border. Concurrently, it is a signal to the Americans not to link the nuclear issue with the aid package since the former is now fait accompli. There is also no doubt that the American Ambassador's recent pronouncements on the nuclear issue link American hardening on this issue with a possible Pakistani softening on the Afghan question. For too long, the Government here has been denying what is obvious to most. On the nuclear issue, as also on other issues affecting the security of Pakistan, the government needs to take the people into confidence and adopt positions that are credible and consistent with the national interest. We feel the national interest has been served by the message emitted from Dr. A.Q. Khan's interview. The Government need not feel unnecessarily defensive or peevish on this issue.

India as Compelled To Increase Defense Budget 'Naive'
BK161455 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
3 Mar 87 p 4

[Editorial: "India's Military Buildup"]

[Text] Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who took over the finance portfolio himself five weeks ago, has presented a budget that has evoked widespread criticism in his country. Apparently in a bid to avoid a 'pro-rich' image on the eve of elections in several states this month, no major tax increase or development spending cuts have been made. But despite a socialist rhetoric, Rajiv Gandhi has gone out of his way to give a big boost to India's gigantic war machine. The defence spendings would go up by 43 percent to 125 billion rupees for the year beginning April 1. The proposed deficit for the year 1987-88 is 57 billion rupees — a staggering figure for a poor and developing nation. An Indian daily has described the budget "bad for growth, bad for prices, bad for the stock market, and neutral in respect of everything else".

It is, however, amazing how the mass media in India, a country which takes pride in Mahatama Gandhi's legacy of non-violence, has conformed to the officially certified truth on the question of defence spendings. With the exception of a mild comment by the *Indian Express* that "the defence cow has never been holier", the Press has remained silent on this issue and even the politicians have avoided criticising Rajiv's reckless pursuit of a military build-up. In a country where millions are hungry and unemployed and the majority lives below the subsistence level, such a huge increase in defence expenditure cannot be justified.

Rajiv's assertion that India has been 'compelled to increase its defence expenditure' is a naive effort to justify New Delhi's hegemonistic aspirations. While accusing its small neighbours of aggressive designs, the big brother has no qualms of conscience in threatening their security by massing troops on their borders. The duality in New Delhi's logic is more than obvious. So long as India wants other nations to obtain from it a certificate of peaceful intentions but wishes to retain for itself the prerogative of unilateral military build-up, its professions of adherence to peace and non-alignment will have no credibility.

NEPAL

Romanian President Arrives; Received by King

BK161559 Katmandu External Service in English 1415 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Excerpts] Their majesties the king and queen have received the president of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu, and Madame Elena Ceausescu at the Narayanhiti Royal Palace today.

His majesty the king today conferred the Order of [name indistinct] on visiting president of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu, and the Order [name indistinct] on Madame Elena Ceausescu. President and Madame Ceausescu are on a state visit to Nepal at the invitation of their majesties the king and queen. It was stated in a notice published today by the principal press secretariat of his majesty the king.

Earlier, President of the Socialist Republic of Romania Nicolae Ceausescu and Madame Elena Ceausescu were accorded a warm and hearty welcome when they arrived in Katmandu today aboard a special aircraft on a 3-day state visit to Nepal. Their majesties the king and queen warmly greeted the distinguished guests at the [words indistinct] of the Tribhuvan International Airport. This is the first visit of President Ceausescu to the Kingdom of Nepal. Pancha Kanyas [holy girls] offered garlands to the distinguished quests as welcome. A contingent of the Royal Nepal Army presented a guard of honor and the national anthems of the two countries were played [words indistinct]. A 21-gun salute also boomed in the air. The airport wore a festive look with flags of Nepal and Romania fluttering in the afternoon air.

Also present at the airport among the distinguished guests were Prime Minister Marich Man Singh Shrestha, Chief Justice Dhanendra Bahadur Singh, Rashtriya Panchayat Chairman Navaraj Subedi, Raj Sabha Standing Committee Chairman Aniruddha Prasad Singh, ministers, heads of the constitution body, high ranking officers of his majesty's government, and others. [passage omitted on welcome accorded by Nepalese people]

Their majesties the king and queen are hosting a state banquet in honor of Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu and Mrs Elena Ceausescu at the royal palace this evening.

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Land Reform Sailendra Kumar Upadhyaya called on President of the Socialist Republic of Romania Nicolae Ceausescu at the Narayanhiti Royal Palace today. Mr Upadhyaya and Foreign Minister of Romania Ioan Totu also held talks at the Foreign Ministry today. During the talks they discussed the possibility of expanding trade between the two countries, disarmament, [words indistinct], and the zone of peace proposal of Nepal also figured in the talks.

Romanian Deputy Prime Minister Dimitrie Ancuta paid a courtesy call on Minister for Water Resources Dr Yaday Prasad Pant at his office [word indistinct]. On the occasion discussions were held on increasing bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries.

AFP Details Talks

BK161600 Hong Kong AFP in English 1555 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] Katmandu, March 16 (AFP) — Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu and Nepal's King Birendra discussed Afghanistan and other international issues during talks here Monday, an official source said.

Mr Ceausescu stressed the importance of the withrawal of nuclear missiles in Europe and an early settlement of the Afghanistan problem, while King Birendra raised issues including the Middle East, Cambodia, and South Africa. The king also stressed the importance of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), whose secretariat opened here recently, the official said.

Nepal had highly appreciated President Ceausescu's role in the past as an honest broker between China and the United States, the Soviet Union, and Egypt, the official said. His wide experience in foreign affairs would benefit Nepal, he added. "What we appreciate is his independent foreign policy though Romania as a Warsaw Pact member."

Mr Ceausescu, the second East European head of state to visit Nepal, arrived here Monday for a three-day state visit. His current South Asian tour has already taken him to India, Bangladesh, and Burma.

SRI LANKA

Fuel Distribution Plan in Jaffna Detailed

BK161645 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 1626 GMT 16 Mar 87

["OANA/Pool"]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 16 (LANKA PUWATH) — The government today decided on a scheme for the distribution of fuel in the Jaffna peninsula.

There will be no restrictions in the supply of kerosene oil, but the government agent will appoint 20 dealers for the whole peninsula, the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation announced in its news bulletin tonight. The supply of fuelwood and engine oil will also be without restrictions.

For petrol and diesel [fuel] the coordinating officer of the area and the government agent Jaffna will work out a scheme and the government agent will implement it immediately.

Private cars will receive three gallons per week, private buses, vans, and lorries ten gallons per week, tractors five gallons per week, and motorcycles one gallon per week. Vehicle owners must produce their vehicle registration book, the revenue license for 1987, and the insurance certificate.

With regard to Sri Lanka Transport Board buses (SLTB), the normal requirements of fuel will be available to them.

Communique Says Jaffna Life Returning to Normal

BK161239 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 1141 GMT 16 Mar 87

["OANA/Pool"]

[Text] Colombo, Mar 16 (LANKA PUWATH) — Life is fast returning to normal in Kattuwan, Vasavilan, and Palali areas and in other areas in the Jaffna peninsula where the security forces have effectively re-established their control, states a special government communique issued by the Media Centre in Colombo today.

Over 80 percent of the civilian families who have deserted their homes and abandoned their property because of terrorist actions during the last three years are now returning to their homes and reclaiming their property.

The Government of Sri Lanka invites and welcomes all those who have not yet returned to come back to their homes, reclaim their property, and live normal lives.

The Government of Sri Lanka has instructed the security forces to give all assistance to such civilian returnees, and to guarantee the protection of all civilian lives and property in the areas where the terrorists have been cleared.

Reports of New Fighting in Mullaittivu Denied

BK161617 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] In Sri Lanka, fresh fighting has erupted between the security forces and the militants at (Vishwamadu) near the northern town of Mullaittivu. Reports from the area say Air Force planes and helicopters bombed and strafed the suspected militant hideouts for about 3 hours this morning. According to bus passengers arriving at Vavuniya from the area, at least 10 militants were killed when a van in which they were travelling was blown up in the bombing. Civilian casualties are not yet known. Official sources, however, categorically denied the incident and claimed Mullaittivu was quiet.

Our Colombo correspondent, Plabon Majumder, reports that the council of Hindu organizations has in a statement appealed to the Sri Lankan Government to call off its military operations and lift the economic restrictions imposed in the north. The statement requested the Indian Government use its good offices to expedite a fair and equitable political settlement.

Indian Daily Reports LTTE Downing of Army Plane

BK161631 Madras THE HINDU in English 5 Mar 87 p 1

[Text] Madras, March 4 — Several high-ranking Sri Lankan Army officers and soldiers were killed when a military transport plane was shown down by LTTE guerrillas today, according to the LTTE here.

Its spokesman said the incident took place at the Palali airfield in the Jaffna peninsula around 10 a.m. when the aircraft was landing. It was hit by LTTE anti-aircraft fire.

Mehdi Hashemi Charged With Murder, Kidnapping

LD171152 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 17 Mar 87

[Text] The Ministry of Intelligence of the Islamic Republic of Iran announces: In continuation of the investigation of charges against Mehdi Hashemi and his collaborators, accurate intelligence follow-up has proven another charge against him, that is, murder and kidnap after the revolution. Clarification of the circumstances of the kidnap and murder of three inhabitants of Qahdarijan, has exposed the true nature of this corrupt and dangerous group, although further investigation is needed in order to accurately ascertain the depths of the corruption and crimes of this group.

According to a report, the murder victims are:

A 65-year-old father and his two children age 34 and 20, who were kidnapped on the Qahdhariaj-Najafabad road on Mehdi Hashemi's orders, by two of his accomplices, in Ramadan 1364 [May 1985] and cruelly murdered.

Also in connection with this crime, two caches of arms and ammunition were discovered in addition to the arms and ammunition belonging to this group which were previously discovered. They are as follows: 106 Kalashnikov rifles; 40 G-3 rifles; 28 machine guns; 7 other machine guns; 9 assorted rifles; 40 colt side arms; 7 RPG-7's; 2 grenades; 1 bazooka; 5 boxes of RPG-7 shells, and more than 100,000 rounds of ammunition.

The statement says: The Intelligence Ministry is grateful to God that it was able to foil the conspiracy of this dangerous group, while following the historic command of the leader of the revolution and by relying on God Almighty.

Tehran Comments on Waite, Archbishop's Letter

LD171315 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1106 GMT 17 Mar 87

[Unattributed political commentary of the day entitled: "The Letter from Canterbury"]

[Excerpts] The archbishop of Canterbury has sent a letter to Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hashemi-Rafsanjani asking him to use Iran's influence in Lebanon to gain Terry Waite's release. Terry Waite is an Anglica.. who had visited Lebanon many times prior to January 1987 in order to assist in the release of American hostages. Although it is not yet publicly clear what role he played in this respect, nevertheless, more than anyone else he had managed to establish close contacts with certain groups in Lebanon who are holding Western hostages. These excessive contacts, however, turned him into yet another hostage. [passage omitted]

The important point, however, is that so far no group or organization has claimed responsibility for his kidnapping. Walid Junblatt, leader of Druze Socialist Party, who had undertaken to look after Terry Waite's safety, has already and in desperation accused the Lebanese Hezbollah of his kidnapping. Responding to this accusation, the Lebanese Hezbollah has strongly denied the allegation. Moreover, the leader of the Amal Movement has said that the kidnappers are not Lebanese and that Iran is not at all involved in the matter. According to the Amal leader, Terry Waite has not been kidnapped but has been detained.

So far, only one Lebanese organization has reported anything on Terry Waite. The Revolutionary Justice Organization claimed in a statement issued last month that tracking and radio devices concealed in Terry Waite's clothing were placed there in order to send information to Western ingelligence organizations and to enable them to trace the site where Terry Waite was to hold talks with the other parties to the negotiations. [passage omitted]

Despite the statement issued by the Revolutionary Justice Organization, it is still not clear who is holding Terry Waite. The Revolutionary Justice Organization, currently engaged in announcing the trial and possible execution of a French hostage if its demands are refused, has made fresh headlines. As for the world propaganda monopolies, they have turned the threat against a French national into one of the most important news items of the day.

The archbishop of Canterbury, in his letter to the speaker of the Majlis, has emphasized that he is prepared to take certain measures toward the release of Motevaselani, who was taken hostage by the Lebanese Phalangist forces. [passage omitted] In his response to the archbishop's request, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hasehmi-Rafsanjani welcomed the suggestion offered by the archbishop of Canterbury and added that the Iranian Government will take certain steps in this direction. He then added: We expect your excellency to notify us as soon as possible about the outcome of your efforts aimed at tracing the whereabouts of the four kidnapped Iranian and Lebanese individuals.

The speaker of the Majlis alluded to a point that indicates the two-faced attitude of Western propaganda circles, namely faced with the kidnapping of a western national, the entire propaganda apparatus is activated, whereas, when somebody from another county is kidnapped, the impression is given that he deserved to be kidnapped.

At any rate, our country's officials have always manaaged to take such steps from a humanitarian point of view. However, this does not mean that they concede to the hegemonist policies pursued by the Western world in the region. The goals of the Islamic Revolution are quite clear to everyone. It is hoped that the Western countries will give some thought to the anger of the oppressed peoples of the world, particularly the anger felt by the Muslim peoples of the Middle East against them.

Velayati Returns From Bulgaria, Greece, Sudan

NC170653 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
0330 GMT 17 Mar 87

[Text] The Central News Unit has reported that Foreign Minister Velayati, who was on a visit to Bulgaria, Greece, and Sudan at the head of a politico-economic delegation, returned to Tehran this morning. Upon his arrival in Tehran, Mr Velayati spoke to our correspondent about his 6-day visit to the three countries. We draw your attention to his remarks:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent]: Mr Velayati, welcome home. Could you please discuss for us the scale of your success from your visit to Bulgaria, your brief stopover in Greece, and your stay in Sudan?

[Velayati] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. My official visit to Bulgaria was in response to an invitation from the esteemed Bulgarian Foreign Minister Mr Mladenov. During the visit there my associates in the Foreign Ministry's various political and economic departments and I met with the president, the foreign minister, and the prime minister, as well as the foreign trade minister. We agreed that the Bulgarian foreign trade minister would come to Iran to attend the joint commission meeting and that, in turn, our roads and transportation minister would visit Bulgaria. The ties between Iran and Bulgaria since the Islamic Revolution have consistently progressed, and we see a bright future ahead for our mutual relations. During the course of this visit we discussed fresh avenues for the broadening of our bilateral relations, and, God willing, what was discussed will gradually be implemented in the future.

During our short stopover in Greece we met with the Greek foreign minister. He agreed to visit Tehran in Khordad [22 May-21 June]. By the way, this visit and the talks we held with the Greek authorities were the first formal talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Greece.

My visit to Sudan was in response to the invitation from the respected Sudanese Foreign Minister Mr Zayn al-'Abidin al-Sharif al-Hindi. While we were there, we met with the president, the prime minister, the State Council chairman, the foreign minister, and the minister of culture. I would like to say that ties between Iran and Sudan have become particularly dynamic since the downfall of the Numayri regime, and the visit of Mr Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi to Tehran at the invitation of our prime minister was the turning point in relations between our two Muslim revolutionary countries. Our visit to Sudan followed up various understandings discussed during the visit of Mr Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and reached some practical agreements. In the next 3 months, the Sudanese foreign minister will visit Tehran. We also agreed that a joint political committee would be set up between the two countries and the two foreign ministers would take turns visiting each country's capital to review bilateral ties, identify weak points, and endeavor to implement coordination and the progress of mutual relations.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much. [end recording]

Musavi Terms Government Performance 'Positive'

LD151403 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 15 Mar 87

[Text] In an interview with a Central News Unit correspondent, the prime minister reviewed the performance of the government during the year 1365 [ends 20 March]. We draw your attention to this interview:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Mr Musavi, a report was given in today's session of the Cabinet on the financial state of the government. Could you please explain those topics discussed?

[Musavi] In the name of God, the session was devoted to a review of economic performance and a (?historical account) of the war. Reports delivered showed that all-round activity by all economic sectors was centered on the most fundamental issue stressed by the leader of the revolution, that is, the war issue; so that we could stand firm on this. Fortunately, the task has been carried out. The reports on finance, particularly on reduced oil prices as well as expansion of war operations, were very important.

It is appropriate that I point out a topic here. Submitted war reports prove that the extent of operations — even from a quantitative angle — was four times the total of all previous years. This demonstrates the efforts made by our selfless combatants and the scale of operations and preparation by various executive departments. Also, these reports reflect the wide effects on the country's financial, foreign exchange, and general economic issues.

An indicator was noted at the Cabinet session that was very important, and which I think will be interesting to you and (?the nation). It was the employment indicator. Given the fall in oil prices at the beginning of the year and given the expansive expenditure of the government as well as the (?drop in exchange), we anticipated a severe drop in this respect. Fortunately, this turned out to be a small figure this year. God willing, during the coming year, thanks to the policies of the government, the foreign exchange situation will stay the same. [sentence as heard] Naturally, we hope the situation will improve for increasing oil prices when we will, God willing, forcefully pursue our fundamental objectives of foreign, domestic, and war policies, as in the present.

Discussions were held about distribution, issues connected with inflation, and also policies confronting the same; all of which require extensive discussions.

[Correspondent] We are reaching the end of 1365. Could you kindly give us your appraisal of the government's performance during the 1365 fiscal year?

[Musavi] I will point out my appraisal in the form of an all-round political, economic, and cultural note thanks to the efforts by our dear combatants and the support of the nation. I view this as a positive performance. Of course, the government cannot be seen as only 24 humble servants at the service of the nation and the totality of the executive apparatus. I always consider the entire executive apparatus to be the government. Under difficult circumstances for our workforce who were tangled in problems, this appraisal [words indistinct] was made at a time when we were facing the most severe economic, financial, foreign exchange, monetary, and oil-related plots waged against us. Despite all of these, viewing the war and various fields related with economic, political, and cultural issues, we see that we have resisted resolutely and without compromise and that we have stood firm.

Today, the whole world knows that our regime has the capacity to stand up against such plots forever. This has come about thanks to extensive cooperation by the people and the government under the guidance and decrees of the imam of the nation,

allowing problems to be put behind us. My answer here is that our enemies should (?learn their lesson)— This has been repeated in the past — and the same enemies should understand that the regime has been able to come out of troubles with heads high. [end recordin

Oil, Gas in 'Common Fields' To Be Exploited

LD161641 Tehran IRNA in English 1634 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA — The Majlis (parliament) authorised the Oil Ministry to sell 100,000 barrels of crude oil per day on usance contract for three years, and spend the money on five oil-exploration projects which are to be implemented by the factories affiliated to the Oil Ministry. The projects will exploit oil and gas resources in the common fields Iran shares with the neighbouring countries. The proposal was approved in an open session of Majlis here Monday during the debate on Article 36 of the budget bill for the fiscal year 1987-88.

The projects of the Oil Ministry will not only prevent oil and gas reserves in the common fields from going to waste but will provide part of the country's petrochemical needs and replace gas with liquid fuels in the country.

Official Affirms Stand on OPEC Oil Price

LD131536 Tehran IRNA in English 1520 GMT 13 Mar 87

[Text] London, March 13, IRNA — Iran has reaffirmed its position that it will not give any discount to its oil customers and will support OPEC's agreement on production and pricing, a high ranking Iranian Oil Ministry official said.

"Customers are appreciating that Iran is not going to lower its price. We are happy that most other OPEC members are doing the same," said Majid Hedayatzadeh, the deputy director for international affairs at the Iranian Oil Ministry.

"It is good to see that OPEC is resisting and insisting on the fixed price," he told IRNA in London.

London's Lloyd's List said Iranian negotiators had turned down cut-price offers from Japanese customers. It said Japanese companies were now seeking cheaper oil from the spot market, namely the North Sea.

Oil prices on the spot market have risen considerably in recent days because of consistent reports of OPEC's determination to hold production and keep prices at around dlrs 18 a barrel as agreed last December.

Analysts say oil consumers, including Japan, are using up their stocks to resist buying from OPEC. But they will not be able to sustain this policy for much longer and buyers are expected to be back on the market in April.

Hedayatzadeh said production on the spot market will not satisfy much greater demand in Japan and other Western nations.

Oil prices rose slightly above dlrs 18 a barrel for North Sea oil on Wednesday for the first time in several weeks before closing at dlrs 17.95 a barrel for April delivery, an increase of 20 cents on the previous day's close.

Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh met his counterparts in major OPEC countries, including Libya, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates during the past week to discuss ways to defend the organization's price and production policy.

Commentary Views Factors Behind War 'Victories'

NC171143 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 17 Mar 87

[Central News Unit Research Group commentary entitled: "The War and Its Deciding Factors"]

[Excerpts] Only a few days remain before the current year ends, a year which has been marked by many vicissitudes. During this past year, the war has seen numerous triumphs and massive victories as a result of the increasing presence of the combatants on the fronts and those who are thirsting for martyrdom. In addition to the triumphs, however, the other important aspects of the war are also worthy of analysis and consideration, for the planning of each of these aspects is analogous to setting up solid pillars which will help to decide the victorious trend of the war.

First of all, what emerges as the most important factor affecting the success of the war, which has been going on for 6 years, is the command and direction of war operations. When the war first began, the mere force of the people's movement and the numbers of people from all strata of society rallying and clamoring to fight the classic [preceding word in English] army of the Iraqi regime, were enough to act as the greatest impediments to the continuation of Iraqi aggression. Following the downfall of the accursed Pahlavi regime and the changes and upheavals in the structure of the military, the Armed Forces themselves were in such a state that they did not have the strength to fight those of the Iraqi regime, which had been readied for combat a year earlier. These problems were aggravated by the shortage of qualified training personnel and the total lack of planned training for those who were converging on the fronts like a tidal wave. Military efficiency and, thus, the success of the military operations were not at optimal level. Time passed, however, and the long-dormant skills of the deployed forces from all levels of society gradually awoke and developed, with most of the actual training taking place on the battlefied itself. The resultant military prowess and efficiency were displayed on the stage of war during the concomitant massive successes, such as the operations in defeating the Abadan siege and the victory at Khorramshahr.

Therefore, the new skills that manifested themselves in later phases of the war, after being tested on the warfronts, enabled the combatants to become those tempered and seasoned individuals of great strength and loftiness, whose names have been written on the pages of the Islamic Revolution's history. At the same time that the military hardware for the war was being developed, the excellence of which resulted from the abundance of talent among the military command's various echelons, and

the popular forces were being organized, the combatants were being taught their first lessons in the Islamic faith, moral growth, and the meaning of martyrdom, as well as the spirit of sacrifice and heroism. [passage omitted]

Along with the command of war operations, the other determining factor linked to the war's outcome, as well as to its second-by-second progress, is combat support technology. In view of the varied nature of the terrain along the length of the borders, efficient preparation, as well as skilled backing for the combatants' operations, is required to tackle the snowcapped peaks in the north and west, the alternating stretches of land and sea in the south, and the barren and sandy areas in the sensitive and strategic parts of the fronts. In reference to this, the combat support groups have carried out remarkable feats along the lengths of the fronts, such as the construction of the 30-km long bridge during the Majnun operations, the liberation of a considerable segment of militarily important land on the southern fronts, and the gaining of control over oil resources comprising one-third of Iraq's oil. These are, in themselves, some of the major innovations in the history of world combat. [passage omitted]

Hence, a brief mention of the roles of the military command and the combat technologists in determining the victorious trend of the war is directly connected with the people's forces, which have manned the fronts over the past 6 years. If it had not been for their ubiquitous and extensive presence, the great victories, which are unparalleled in the history of world combat, would not have been attained. At present, the Mobilization of the Oppressed Organization has decided to initiate an extraordinary dispatch of the warriors of the Mahdi. This dispatch, which is scheduled for the first day of the New Year and the Nowruz festival, has, as is usual, been warmly welcomed by both the trained regular forces and the combat specialist forces. It is therefore appropriate that the people's forces continue with greater resolve, because the fate of the war and its termination in a victorious manner is not possible without a strong presence at the fronts and the destruction of the 'Aflaqite Iraqi regime.

Departure of Combatants for Fronts Reported

NC160732 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] According to the Central News Unit, the 3d convoy of the Warriors of the Mahdi — may the Almighty expedite his advent — known as the Zolfaqar Convoy, left Ardabil last evening for the fronts. It is reported that this convoy is comprised of one division of combat-specialist forces, the Labbayk ya Imam [we respond to you O Imam] forces, experienced and trained personnel and members of the resistance bases of the cities of Ardabil, Khalkhal, Meshkinshahr, (Gerni), Asadabad-e Moghan, and Pilehsavar. These combatants were given a warm sendoff as they departed from Ardabil.

Communique No 2,777 Updates Combat Operations

LD161637 Tehran IRNA in English 1625 GMT 16 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA — Iranian Navy gun boats intercepted and inspected seven cargo ships and oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz Sunday but allowed them to continue voayage after finding no suspicious cargo on board, said a military communique here Monday.

Communique Number 2,777 released by the Joint Staff Command of Iran's Armed Forces said that Iraqi forces sustained heavy losses in men and equipment throughout the fronts in artillery duels with Muslim forces of Iran Sunday.

Iranian Gendarmerie forces responded to Iraqi artillery fire in parts of the southern and western fronts Sunday, killing a number of enemy soldiers and destroying 15 gun emplacements and observation posts of theirs.

In the western fronts Sunday, Iranian Muslim combatants directed their artillery fire on Iraqi supply routes and gun emplacements, inflicting several casualties and losses on enemy troops.

A considerable number of Iraqi soldiers were killed or wounded and parts of enemy defence lines and gun emplacements were destroyed in the southern fronts Sunday by heavy Iranian artillery and tank fire.

Iranian forces reconnoitered and shelled Iraqi positions in Piranshah, Sar Dasht, and Marivan, northwestern fronts, Sunday, killing or wounding a number of Iraqi soldiers and silencing enemy fire.

Artillery fire of Iranian Muslim combatants on Iraqi armoured columns in Yabis, Hoseyniyeh, and Nahr-e 'Anbar, southern fronts, Sunday inflicted heavy damage on them, said the communique.